

SOME ODD STORIES.

INTERESTING TALES OF ADVENTURE
ON SEA AND LAND.The Blood Diamond of Brazil—An Old
Mine's Story of the Fatal Stone and How
It Caused Two Deaths—Sunk to Rise No
More.

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"Do you know there are such things as fatal diamonds and to possess one means certain and violent death?" asked the old diamond miner. "It is true," he went on, noting my look of incredulity. "I saw one of the stones in Australia, and my partner found one of the oddest things in Brazil. They are called blood diamonds, and the name is well applied. No matter which way you turn it, in some corner or angle of it turns a crimson spot that seems like a drop of blood. Before the Australian stone was lost it had been in the possession of nine different persons, and every one of them died a violent death."

"My partner in Brazil was a likely young fellow named John Robinson. He was born in Michigan and had taken to wandering over the world at an early age. It was his ambition to make a fortune, return to Michigan and support his parents in luxury as long as they lived. Night after night, as we smoked our pipes, he talked of this one great desire that possessed him. Poor fellow! All his chances were blasted the moment he touched that fatal diamond."

"I never knew exactly how it came into his possession. There was some mystery about that, and he did not explain. I am certain he did not steal it from the mine, for it was partially polished, bringing out strongly the bloody light in the stone. It seemed to me that the one who set out to polish it had not lived to finish his task."

"I noticed John's excitement some time before he showed me the stone, and I wondered what could all this be. My soul, I was in front of our cabin door when he came and crumpled close beside me, his voice trembling as he whispered:

"I'm going back home tomorrow, Hank! You mean you are going to start, I corrected. 'Have you given up making your fortune?'"

"Not a bit of it, man! I have my fortune in my pocket!"

"What?"

"Here," he softly cried, excitedly fumbling in his clothes and producing some thing. "Take a look at this!"

"Then he held the diamond up before my eyes, causing me to drop my pipe and utter a cry of amazement. The stone was as large as an egg, and once placed showed me it was of the very highest grade."



THE LAST OF THE FUGITIVE.

"Where in the name of heaven did you get that?" I asked.

"I found it," was his evasive reply. "What's it worth, Hank?"

"It's worth a king's ransom," I declared as I reached out to take it from his fingers. Then I saw the drop of blood lurking in an angle of the fatal stone, and I fell back, feeling my face grow pale.

"What's that?" he questioned, but when I had told him he laughed at me, saying he was not superstitious. All the same, I refused to touch the thing and urged him to throw it away. He actually thought me crazy."

"While we were examining the stone I glanced up and discovered a pair of dark, glittering eyes fastened upon us. The eyes quickly disappeared around the corner of the hut, but not until I had recognized the evil face of Matanza, a native laborer."

"That night I rested poorly, but in some manner Robinson managed to slip out of the cabin without arousing me. When morning came, I discovered he was gone. I know not what fate possessed him to sneak away in such a manner, but I think it was the evil influence of the diamond."

"It was near midday when he was found, less than half a mile away. He was stone dead, his skull having been crushed like an eggshell by means of a heavy stone. The accursed diamond was gone, for its bloody work was done."

"In a moment I suspected Matanza, and inquiry revealed the fact that he had not been seen that day. A search failed to find a trace of him, and then I told what I thought had happened. In less than an hour an armed party was ready to start on the trail, which was to be followed by bloodhounds, the animals being kept to hunt down runaway slaves."

"It was near sundown when we came up with him. He had fallen and sprained his ankle, so he could not travel very fast, and there was no chance of his escaping. When he saw he was fairly cornered, he turned to shake his clenched hands at us, and then he began hobbling down a cut that led to a dark sink hole that was like a basin filled with black water, on the surface of which nothing floated."

"Thinking he might try to give us the slip by climbing up some rocks to the right, I hastily scrambled over the boulders to intercept him. When I reached the summit, I could look down upon him, but he stood at the verge of the sink hole, trapped. He had the fatal diamond in his hand, and he was wildly cursing the stone in his own language."

"You have brought me death, as I gave death to the American!" he cried. "You shall bring death to no more! Let he who can draw you from beneath the black water!"

"Then one of the dogs broke from leath and came baying at the fugitive. Matanza turned to face the creature, and with one leap the hound fastened its teeth in the native's throat. Over and over whirled man and brute as they shot downward. I saw an instant gleam of the blood diamond just as they struck, and then the black water closed sluggishly over them. We waited a few minutes, but neither dog nor man rose to the surface. The fatal diamond was lost forever."

With His Own Weapon.

I was with the Northern Pacific railroad survey when it made its way up the Yellowstone valley. Dave Stone, a young engineer of our party, had made a bitter enemy of Roper Jack, one of the scouts and Indian fighters, and as Jack had an ugly record it was expected that trouble would follow. Stone was a fearless fellow, and one of the best there I ever saw, therefore he did not seem to care in the least for the threats and black looks of the scout. More than once I warned him to look out for the Roper, but he only laughed at me, saying he was able to take care of himself."

As I anticipated, the affair finally culminated. Hot words passed between the two, and then Jack declared the engineer was a coward. I was standing where I could look Stone square in the face as these words were uttered, and I saw him turn very white through the coat of tan on his countenance, while his jaws hardened and his dark eyes glittered."

"You are a liar!" he roared jolly. "And

GEMS IN VERSE.

Death's Protest.

Why dost thou shrink from my approach, O death?
Why dost thou ever flee in fear and flight
To my false rival, life? I do but bring
Thee rest and calm. Then wherefore dost thou
Run?

And curse me? Since the forming of God's plan
I have not hurt or harmed a mortal thing:
I have bestowed sweet balm for every ail,
And peace eternal for earth's stormy span.

The wild, mad prayer for comfort, sent in vain
To knock at the indifferent heart of life,
I, death, have answered. Knowest thou not
My cruel rival, who sends all thy pain
And weeps thy end out in unmeaning strife?
Why dost thou hold to him, then, shunning me?
—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

"Home, Sweet Home."

When all the battles are lost and won,
The last word spoken, the argument done,
Which, which is the last land under the sun?
The question is pondered by you and me
As our hearts are sailing life's mystic sea,
But as to the answer we disagree.

"Oh, the very best land," says the German, "is mine!"
And his heart beats quick and his moist eyes shine
As he loudly sings "Die Wacht am Rhein."
But the Frenchman jeers at the German's praise,
While he fondly dreams of France, his heart his raise
In the fervent strains of the "Marseillaise."

At the Frenchman's boasting the Scottish cries,
"What land so bonny beneath the skies
As the land where the great Sir Walter lies?"
Then a Muscovite voice is heard to declare,
"Were my fellow creatures but wise and fair
They'd do to a man on the Russian bair."

The Irishman answers, with a sorrowful sigh,
"O'er the universe, mile by mile,
And you'll find no land like the Emerald Isle."
The Englishman comments in accents bland,
"I'm thinking there's only one civilized land,
And that's the name, you must understand."

The Yankee, rising, with deep emotion
Exclaims, "I'm firmly set in the notion
My eagle's the gem of the land or the ocean!"
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In essence each choice is really the same—
It springs from a common, ineffable flame.

Whatever our race, wherever we roam,
The spot that is dearest to each is home,
The spot that dearest is home,
The spot that dearest is home,
—Brandon Banner.

Rest.

My feet are weary, and my hands are tired,
My soul oppressed,
And with desire have I long desired
Rest—only rest.

'Tis hard to tell when toil is almost vain
In barren ways,
'Tis hard to sow and never garner grain
In harvest days.

The burden of my days is hard to bear,
But God knows best;
And I have prayed, but vain has been my prayer,
For rest—sweet rest.

'Tis hard to plant in spring and never reap
The autumn yield;
'Tis hard to till, and when 'tis tilled to weep
O'er fruitless field.

And so I cry, a weak and human cry,
So heart oppressed,
And so I sigh, a weak and human sigh,
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My way has wound across the desert years,
And cares infest
My path, and through the flowing of hot tears
I pine for rest.

'Twas always so. When still a child, I laid
On mother's breast
My weary little head. Even then I prayed,
As now, for rest.

And I am restless still. 'Till soon be over,
For down the west
Life's sun is setting, and I see the shore
Where I shall rest.
—Father Ryan.

The Baby.

The little, tottering baby feet,
With pattering steps and slow,
With pattering echoes soft and sweet,
Into my heart they go.

They also go in grimy places,
In muddy pools and dusty ways;
They tread the loam in trackless mazes
They wander to and fro.

The baby hands that clasp my neck
With touches dear and true,
Are the same hands that clutch and wreck
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That makes the listening heart rejoice,
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